

Message Text

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11

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1738

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, UNHCR, VS

SUBJ: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASES

REF: A. HONG KONG 8900, B. SECSTATE 184805, C. GENEVA 6091

1. UNTIL NOW INDOCHINESE BOAT CASES HAVE BEEN HANDLED ON A CRISIS BASIS WITH UNHCR AND RECEIVING COUNTRIES SCURRYING AROUND TO DEVELOP AN AD HOC SOLUTION TO EACH CASE AS IT APPEARS, AS IF IT WERE SOME SORT OF UNIQUE EMERGENCY. THE REFUGEE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS A LONG-TERM ONE, AND ITS SOLUTION MUST ALSO BE LONG TERM AND PROCEDURES ROUTINIZED. THIS REGION CAN EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS WITH VIETNAMESE BOAT CASES FOR SOME TIME TO COME. THE NEW REGIME IN VIETNAM IS CURRENTLY EXECUTING A PROGRAM OF "SANITIZING" THE SOUTH OF ANY FOREIGN PRESENCE AND PRESSURING A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF ITS URBAN POPULATION TO MOVE TO "NEW ECONOMIC AREAS." THESE MOVES COMBINED WITH A CRACKDOWN
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ON OLD "BOURGEOIS" WAYS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RESULT IN A CONTINUING

FLOW OF ESCAPEES INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. RECENT REPORTS OF SHIPS PASSING UP REFUGEES AT SEA, AND SEA COUNTRIES FORCING SMALL REFUGEE BOATS OUT TO SEA UNDERSCORES THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM FACING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

2. AS PART OF A U.S. RESPONSE TO THIS HUMAN PROBLEM, WE HAVE ALREADY PROPOSED IN REF A THAT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS FOR REFUGEES UNDER THE P7 (CONDITIONAL ENTRY) PROGRAM. AT PRESENT, THIS PROGRAM IS LIMITED IN EAST ASIA TO PERSONS PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN HONG KONG. IN ADDITION, WE BELIEVE THAT A VISIT BY HCR SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN TO APPROPRIATE COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION PROPOSED IN REF B WOULD DRAW ATTENTION TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM AND MAY CONTRIBUTE TO SOME SEA COUNTRIES BEING MORE FORTHCOMING.

3. AS A REGIONAL PROBLEM, HOWEVER, A LONG-TERM INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION MUST BE DEVELOPED. THE HNHCR PROPOSAL IN REF C PROVIDES AN INITIAL BASIS FOR SUCH A SOLUTION AND WOULD SEEM WORKABLE PROVIDING A REASONABLE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS PROJECT SCHEME, WE SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNHCR PROCESSING CENTER LOCATED IN THE SEA REGION WHERE BOAT CASE REFUGEES COULD BE CARED FOR AND PROCESSED PENDING THEIR RESETTLEMENT. SUCH A CENTER WOULD ENCOURAGE SEA COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE FIRST ASYLUM TO BOAT CASES AND ENABLE UNHCR TO BETTER ORGANIZE AND ADMINISTER THE SPECIAL ADMISSION QUOTAS PROVIDED IN THEIR SCHEME. IDEALLY, IT WOULD EVEN PROVIDE TRAINING AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE THE REFUGEES TO ADAPT TO A NEW LIFE ABROAD.

4. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT FINDING A COUNTRY AGREEABLE TO HOST SUCH A CENTER MAY BE DIFFICULT, WE BELIEVE AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE PROVIDING THE HOST COUNTRY WERE GIVEN UNHCR ASSURANCE THAT CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SUCH A CENTER WOULD BE FUNDED BY UNHCR AND EVENTUAL DEPARTURE BY THE REFUGEES TO ONE OF THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHEME WOULD BE GUARANTEED.

5. WHETHER REFUGEES ARE HANDLED ON AN AD HOC BASIS AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OUTLINED IN THE PRESENT UNHCR SCHEME OR THROUGH A PROCESSING CENTER, SOME KIND OF LONG-RANGE COMMITMENT FROM THE U.S. WILL BE NEEDED. UNTIL NOW, THE USG HAS CARRIED THE MAJOR SHARE OF THE BURDEN IN BOTH FINANCING REFUGEE OPERATIONS AND ACCEPTING REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT. AS A WAY OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR AN INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION AND AT THE SAME TIME SETTING A LIMIT TO THE U.S. COMMITMENT, THE U.S. COULD GUARANTEE A FIXED PERCENTAGE OF THE FUNDING AND

ACCEPT REFUGEES ON A SET RATIO (I.E., ONE FOR EVERY SO MANY
ACCEPTED BY OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES). SUCH AN
ARRANGEMENT OFFERS THE ADVANTAGES OF MEETING THIS LONG-TERM
PROBLEM IN A HUMANE AND ORDERLY MANNER WHILE AT THE SAME
TIME INTERNATIONALIZING THE SOLUTION AND SETTING A LIMIT TO
U.S. PARTICIPATION.
CROSS

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